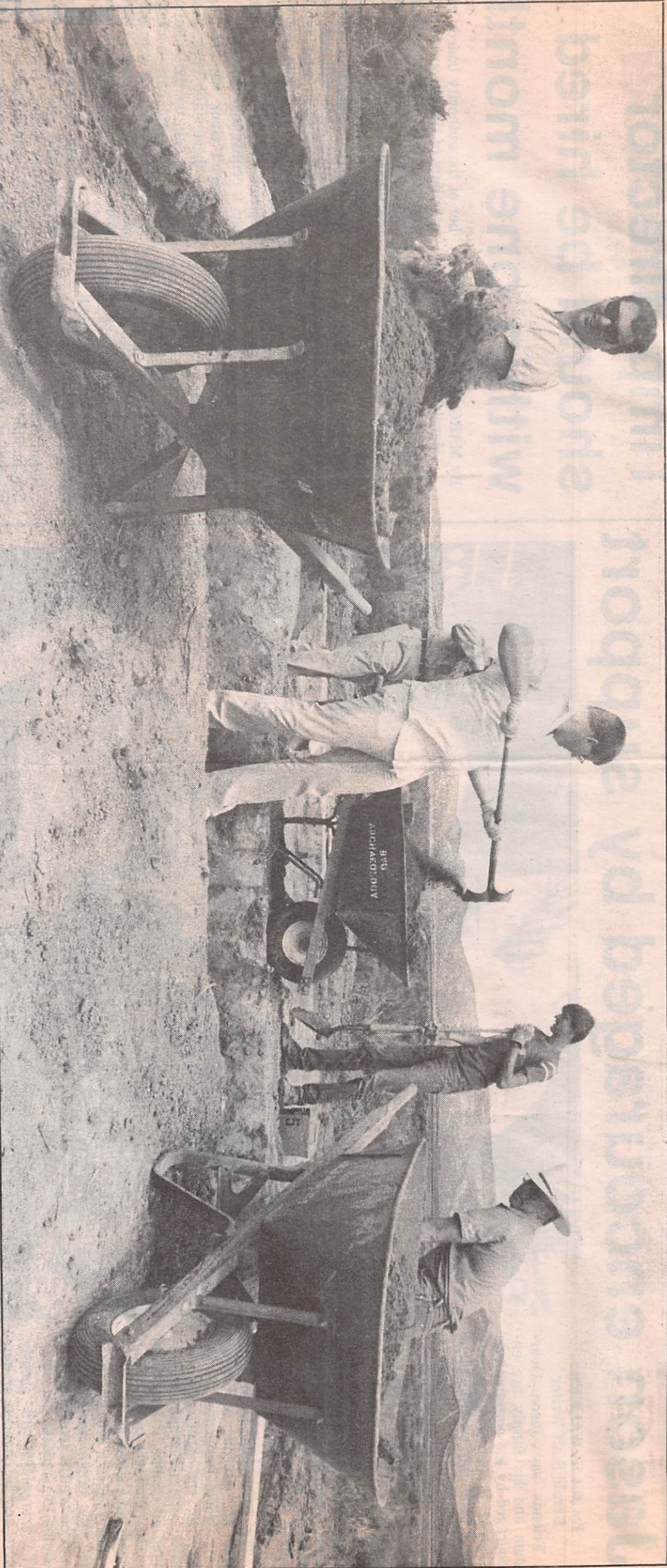




The wheelbarrow and shovel are key tools of time detectives. BYU archaeologists are using these tools to unearth the history of nation's largest military camp prior to the Civil War.

Time detectives uncovering buried secrets of Camp Floyd

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By PATRICK CHRISTIAN
Herald Staff Writer

She is the crew chief for the
BYU dig and works under the
that nearly 10,000 different ar-
tifacts have been found so far.



FAIRFIELD, Utah County — A desert breeze blows a powdered clay across a mostly bare Cedar Valley landscape.

Here where Utah's third largest city once bustled with activity, a desert lizard scampers over the clay that was once adobe for buildings that housed 35,000 U.S. Army troops sent to Utah by the U.S. War Department.

Led by Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, the troops had come to Utah to put down a so-called Mormon rebellion, but were met with mostly peaceful pioneers.

Today, there are a handful of homes in the old residential area, but all but one of the hundreds of adobe military buildings have vanished. Once a big city, Fairfield is just one of the very small, rural communities that dot Utah's landscape.

But time detectives in the form of archaeologists from Brigham Young University are uncovering secrets long hidden and hoping to add pages to a scant history of Camp Floyd, the biggest U.S. Army camp in the nation before the Civil War.

"There were 35,000 actual troops and by the time you add about 5,000 contract civilians and another 5,000 camp followers, you have a pretty big city," said Karolyn Jensen.

archaeologist and professor Dr. Dale Berge who is in charge of the Camp Floyd project.

She said there were the usual camp-follower professions of merchants and saloon operator that served the U.S. Army soldiers. "One whole street was nothing but brothels and saloons, she said.

Since the buildings were built of adobe bricks the rains and wind have eroded the buildings down to ground level then they were covered by blowing desert soil.

The BYU archaeologists find historical evidence of the buildings only by digging below the surface.

"It appears this camp was built and supplied by Mormons in Utah County. They made and sold the adobe bricks to the army for a penny apiece."

She said merchants sold the food and other supplies the soldiers needed, and evidence of what was sold is being uncovered by BYU archaeologists.

"Kids probably caught fish and sold them here, because we have found fish bones. And fruit from Utah Valley orchards was brought here because we are finding peach pits. And we are finding piles of beef bones."

Many other items are being found too. One of the excavators, Warren Van Pelt, said

Jensen said some of the best finds have been in the trench latrines and in the camp dumps.

BYU's time detectives have found a lot of liquor bottles that were discarded at the latrine. Jensen said that it is believed that drinking was forbidden within the military camp, and it appears that some soldiers may have been secretly drinking at the latrine and getting rid of the evidence there.

"These soldiers were a smoking drinking lot," says Jensen. She said that many broken pipes and bottles have been found. Many military emblems and buttons have also been found.

Jensen said whenever anything is found, it seems almost like Christmas. She said that someone will yell and then everyone goes over to see what was just discovered.

"Once we pulled a Canadian penny with an 1852 date on it from the Eastern Bank of Canada. That was really exciting," she said.

According to Jensen, camp Floyd had almost 300 buildings and stretched for miles.

"We could be hear excavating for 50 years to discover everything." She said the BYU archaeologists accept and appreciate the help of volunteers.



Trent Nelson Photos

Archaeologists Todd and Judy Furniss sift the earth for its secrets of Camp Floyd.

Memorial activities planned

During Memorial Day weekend displays of items BYU archaeologist have found at Camp Floyd will be on display.

Activities will also include Memorial Day services at Camp Floyd Cemetery con-

ducted by the American Legion and the Utah County Civil War Association.

Other activities will include Civil War era displays and tours of the Stagecoach Inn and Camp Floyd Commissary. Archaeological excava-

tion will be open to the public. A tour of the Fairfield School district will also conducted.

On Saturday and Sunday, the Utah County Civil War Association will have its camp set up.

Excavations to resume at Camp Floyd

You, too, can be part of BYU dig into 19th century military headquarters

By Jerry Spangler
Deseret News staff writer

FAIRFIELD, Utah — Little more remains than desert grass and sagebrush. But some 130 years ago, the rather bleak valley was bustling with more than 3,000 federal troops who had come to Utah to put down the "Mormon rebellion," and another 1,000 civilian employees.

"That would have made Camp Floyd the largest military camp in the United States prior to the Civil War," said Brigham Young University archaeologist Dale Berge.

BYU archaeologists will return to Camp Floyd — renamed Fort Crittenden in 1861 — this summer to resume excavations started in 1983 and continued every summer since. This season, researchers will dig into the actual headquarters of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, as well as an ordnance shop and a large well.

In past years, researchers uncovered a headquarters building, a barracks for the 10th Infantry Regiment, a mess hall, an officer's quarters and several trash areas.

A smorgasbord of 19th century artifacts have been unearthed ranging from cattle bones to bullets to buttons.

"We have a lot of historical data about Camp Floyd, even information on the people who were there," said Berge. "We want to fill in our understanding of the daily lives of the people here, what they ate, how much they relied on the local populations."

Camp Floyd was one of the most important 19th century historical sites anywhere in the United States.

It was home to 10 companies each of the 5th, 7th and 10th Infantries, the 2nd Dragoons and three batteries of the 4th Artillery.

Patrols ranged from Washington to California and New Mexico with troops fighting hostile Indians, escorting wagon trains and providing a deterrent to any potential Mormon rebellion.

It also played a significant role in the buildup to the Civil War.

An 1859 map showed some 200 buildings at

Camp Floyd, and researchers hope that some day the site can be purchased and restored to its 19th century glory.

"It would make an ideal historical park," said Berge, noting it's proximity to I-15 and Salt Lake County. Most of Camp Floyd is on private property, though a portion is on state land adjacent to where the BYU researchers are working. Camp Floyd is just west of Utah Lake, in Cedar Valley.

Field work runs from May 3 to June 23. In past years, the excavations have been immensely popular among schoolchildren and adult visitors alike.

"We get all sorts of letters back that it was the best field trip they'd ever been on," said Berge.

"They've actually touched history, which is rare for them. They get a thrill and they remember it forever."

Volunteers are welcome, and no previous archaeological experience is required. "It's a slow process and we have a small crew," said Berge. "We can use all the help people want to offer."

For more information about participating in the dig, contact Berge at 378-6110.

Archaeology week:

April 10: Opening day of displays at the Historical Society in the Rio Grande Depot provided by the Utah Museum of Natural History, the State Historical Society, the Shoshone Indian tribe and private citizens.

April 11: Public lecture by James F. O'Connell, professor of anthropology at the University of Utah, on "Following the Hazda: Why An Archaeologist Does Ethnography." The free lecture begins at 7:30 p.m. at the US WEST Auditorium, 250 E. Second South.

In Moab, a dramatic slide presentation on "Navajo Sacred Geography" will be given by Bob McPherson at the Bureau of Land Management district office.

April 12: Layne Miller will discuss how to photograph archaeological sites during a meeting of the Utah Statewide Archaeological Society at 7:30 p.m. in the YMCA Building at 322 E. Third South.

April 14: A flint-knapping demonstration and an atlatl throwing contest will be held at the Grand County library in Moab. A lecture on primitive weapons will be presented by Don Berge at the Moab Civic Center.

Activities for children are scheduled, as is a field trip to Silver Island in the West Desert.

In Moab, tours of a recently discovered pit house in downtown Moab will be conducted.